

# OCHRE Evaluation: Negotiating the Accord

## Illawarra-Wingecarribee Alliance Aboriginal Corporation

### Evaluation Plan

October 2017

*The research team from the Social Policy Research Centre acknowledges  
the traditional custodians of the land we will be working on and  
pay our respect to Elders past, present and future.*

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The Social Policy Research Centre is based in the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences at UNSW Sydney. This report is an output of the *OCHRE* Evaluation, funded by Aboriginal Affairs NSW.

# 1 Introduction

The Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Australia (the research team) have been contracted by Aboriginal Affairs NSW, Department of Education, to conduct an evaluation of the Accord negotiation process with the Illawarra-Wingecarribee Alliance Aboriginal Corporation (IWAAC), to identify strengths of the process, to identify any challenges encountered, and to identify any strategies for addressing these challenges and opportunities for improvements. This will be carried out alongside the larger *OCHRE* evaluation. *OCHRE* is the community-focused plan for Aboriginal affairs in NSW.

The evaluation will be based on the principles of decolonising research, consistent with the underlying philosophy of *OCHRE* to facilitate the self-determination of Aboriginal peoples in NSW. For more information on the *OCHRE* evaluation, see the *OCHRE Evaluation Plan*.

This plan sets out how the evaluation of the Accord process will be conducted. This is an abridged version of the detailed data collection plan developed and approved by the community. This plan identifies the research questions, key stakeholders, and how data will be collected, analysed and reported.

The evaluation of the Accord process is short-term and will report within ten weeks of the signing of the Accord.

## 2 About IWAAC and the Accord process

A number of Aboriginal communities applied to be part of the Local Decision Making initiative under *OCHRE*. As part of the initiative, communities agree priorities for community-based regional self-governance in the form of an Accord. IWAAC was selected to be part of Local Decision Making in December 2013.

Regional areas represented by IWAAC include the Local Government Areas of Wollongong, Kiama, Shellharbour and Wingecarribee. Close to 7,240 people who live in the region are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, with 13% of this group being under 5 years old.

IWAAC entered the formal Accord negotiations in June 2017.

More information can be found here <http://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/ochre-a-continuing-conversation/about-the-communities-involved>.

## 3 Ethics and permissions

On 9 August 2016, ethics approval was received from the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council Human Research Ethics Committee (AH&MRC HREC) for the *OCHRE* Evaluation. This was extended to cover the Accord process in 2017. For further information, see Section 5.3.3 of the *OCHRE Evaluation Plan: Overview and Stage 1*.

In 2017, the research team also received approval from NCARA on behalf of LDM Chairs to continue the conversation with the research team about the Accord Process.

## 4 Gathering information

The evaluation of the IWAAC Accord negotiation is designed to answer the following questions:

1. What was the history of the Alliance and how did this impact on the operation and outcomes of the negotiations?
2. Have any of the learnings from the negotiation of the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly been applied to negotiation process and which learnings? What was the impact?
3. What were the governance structures for the government and Alliance parties in the negotiations? What were the strengths, weakness and challenges and how were they overcome?
4. What was the negotiation process? What were the strengths, weakness and challenges for the parties in the process and how were these overcome?
5. What were the positions held by the parties to the negotiation (e.g. seniority, paid or unpaid)? How many hours of their time was spent in preparing for and participating in the Accord negotiations? What did each party do during the process and feel responsible for? What were the challenges encountered in performing this role, including power to contribute and make decisions?
6. What were the personal outcomes for each party to the negotiation as a result of being involved in the negotiation? If there were personal outcomes, does the individual believe this will change their approach in similar circumstances?
7. Has the Accord negotiation process changed or influenced the relationships between parties involved and if so, in what ways?

### 4.1 Focusing the evaluation through co-design

This plan is built from co-design conversations that occurred with IWAAC in June 2017. For further information on co-design see Section 5.4.1 of the *OCHRE Evaluation Plan: Overview and Stage 1*.

### 4.2 Stakeholder groups

There are many different people and organisations who have been or are involved in negotiating the Accord. The research team will approach the following groups:

- Representatives of the local Aboriginal communities through their position on IWAAC
- Local partners and service providers

- NSW Government representatives, including Aboriginal Affairs NSW staff, and the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet involved in the negotiations
- The independent facilitator and expert advisor to the negotiations
- Other stakeholders as suggested.

#### 4.2.1 Sampling frame

The sampling frame below indicates the range of people we hope to have conversations with and how they may be approached. We aim to have conversations with up to 20 stakeholders.

### 4.3 Collecting data

During the period from September 2017 until the Accord is signed, data will be collected by an Aboriginal researcher from SPRC. The researcher will attend IWAAC meetings to facilitate group discussion about the Accord process. SPRC will also interview Government stakeholders by phone during this time.

Conversation guides have been developed to help answer the evaluation questions and assess the measures identified in co-design. The cultural appropriateness of the questions in the guides will be checked with local Aboriginal peoples.

Data from interviews and group interviews will be supplemented with a desk top review of documentation associated with the Accord process and any other contextual data (such as demographic data publicly available from the ABS).

#### 4.3.1 Identifying and recruiting participants

Potential participants were identified using a range of methods to reduce the risk that some stakeholder groups would not be represented. Participants will be identified by IWAAC, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Aboriginal Affairs NSW.

The participant information statement and consent forms will be provided to all interested persons to inform their decision to take part.

### 4.4 Analysis of data collected and validation of findings

Data that will be analysed include data collected in the community (through conversations with IWAAC), documents associated with the Accord process, as well as any other contextual data. Analysis will be undertaken over the data collection period and up to ten weeks after the signing of the Accord.

SPRC are due to report back ten weeks after the Accord has been signed. Within ten weeks of signing (with additional time allowed if this falls over the holiday period), SPRC researchers will meet with IWAAC to validate findings and discuss any recommendations that the Aboriginal community consider appropriate.

## 4.5 Reporting findings

The research team will deliver the final report to IWAAC at the subsequent IWAAC meeting and seek their permission to share their report with the NSW Government. Note that SPRC must provide an embargoed copy of the report to Aboriginal Affairs NSW to meet the terms of their contract.